No. 7

James

An Essay
on
Amenorrhœa

S. M. Fisher

admitted March 20. 1819

Gentlemen

As the laws of this University require a dissertation from every candidate for Medical honors, I offer this for inspection but I must acknowledge that nothing new or original will be found in it and hope that its being the production of a juvenile mind, will apologise in some measure for its imperfections

That secretion from the vessels of the uterus of a healthy female, which takes place every month, is termed, catamenia or menses, and upon the regular recurrence of which, the health of women essentially depends. The period at which young women begin to menstruate, is very different, in different countries. Between the tropics, girls begin to menstruate so early as nine, ten or twelve years of age; in the colder regions of the north, not until they are upwards of nineteen; and in temperate climates, as in this country, between thirteen and fourteen. The first visitation of the menses, in most females, is announced by frequent headaches, pain in the backs loins, and hypogastric region, soreness and distention of the breasts, feverish symptoms, and various hysterical affections; these however most commonly go off without requiring any particular treatment. In our climate, between the ages of forty five and fifty, the menstrual discharge ceases suddenly, in others it returns after longer and longer periods, and goes off gradually. The quantity discharged, at each menstrual period, is also influenced by climate and the constitution; so that what in a cold coun-

-try would
may be pr
country th
pronounce
ought to
They shou
extremely
of what
"woman
after the
was dis
to learn
These dis
considered
on the m
examinati
this dis
Amenorrh
-venes, an
our most
turn w
of the m
-strual
kinds; th
not beg

-try would be deemed excessive, in a hot climate may be no more than is natural. In our country the usual quantity is from four to six ounces. During this evacuation, woman ought to be as quiet as practicable. They should be, particularly at this time, extremely cleanly. The statement by Moses of what he supposed the Lord said, "woman should not touch any thing after this issue for six or seven days, was designed to ensure greater attention to cleanliness".

These desultory remarks, are merely to be considered as preliminary to observations on the morbid suspension of the natural evacuation, which will be the subject of this dissertation.

Amenorrhea is a malady of frequent occurrence, and sometimes baffles the skill of our most eminent practitioners. By this term we are to understand an absence of the menses. The interruption of the menstrual flux, is to be considered as of two kinds; the one being, when the menses do not begin to flow at that period of life

as which
being tha
taken p
causes th
return, a
of these
the supp
in this
pothesis,
suffice i
of menstr
orrhage,
otherwise
the mens
as was
globules
from the
retained
my obs
to confe
ines con
to the res
will ad
a vant
urine

at which they usually appear, and the other being that when, after they have repeatedly taken place & for some time they do, from other causes than pregnancy or lactation, cease to return, at their usual periods. The former of these is named the retention; the latter the suppression of the menses. I shall not give in this essay any history of the different hypotheses, of the proximate cause of the menses suffice it to say, that most authors, speak of menstruation as if it were a real hemorrhagy, whereas the fact is known, to be otherwise. It is now well ascertained, that the menses are the product of a secretion; as was proven by Dr Hunter, whereby, the red globules and serum of the blood, are seperated from the fibrina. the former ejected, the latter retained. Of the first species of Amenorrhoea, my observations will be limited. I intend to confine myself to suppression, and give in as concise a view of the practise suitable to the restoration of this secretion, as the subject will admit. The causes of retention are a want of energy in the system, or in the uterine vessels, or a malformation of the

organ
intenl
diseasc
Vamil
aliment
or you
or acco
a dep
yellow
skin
a lea
faint
costiv
breath
be in
obvious
in ge
in to
by ex
ing o
and co
such a
-tion,
such a
valid

organs of generation. Dr Cullen considers retention of the menses, to depend on a diseased state of the ovaries; while Professor Hamilton, refers it to a depraved state of the alimentary canal. The retention of the menses in young woman, is frequently preceded or accompanied, by symptoms of Chlorosis; as depraved appetite, craving chalk-plaster, yellow countenance, edema of the legs- the skin under the eyes is puffy- and of a lead colour, palpitations, pulse feble, faintness, disinclination to motion, bowels costive- langour, and feblenes, offensive breath &c.

The indication of cure, in this species is obvious. It is, to restore tone to the system in general, and to the uterus in particular. The tone of the system is to be restored by exercise in the open air, dancing, riding on horseback, or in a carriage, the warm and cold bath; at the same time tonics, such as cinchona, columba, quassia, gentian, and also the preparations of Iron, such as chalybeate waters, tincture of muriate iron or carbonate of Iron. These

remedies as a general rule, are to be preceded by an emetic or a purgative; costiveness, if not the cause, as has been supposed, by a late ingenious writer, is a constant attendant of this disease, and must be removed.
Cathartics are never to be lost sight of in the treatment of amenorrhea, and after their administration, tonics come in admirably. Removal to a warm climate has been successful, when other means have failed.
As external remedies - the following have been recommended, pediluvium, blisters to the sacrum, and thighs - as near to the groins as possible, and if convenient a change from a life of celibacy, from this change the uterine organs are excited into action. Having considered the disease, when accompanied with symptoms of debility, I shall next treat of it when attended with febrile symptoms, occurring in robust - and florid girls: In the treatment of which I shall be brief. Bleeding, low diet, moderate exercise, bathing the feet and legs in warm water and the last, though not the least in point of

gnacy, a
-timen
I shall
of the a
pinoing,
it is the
moving
establish
suppro
by esp
getting
of the m
violent
by some
nalis,
the ab
stud
in, sl
on the
region,
sic an
-tipate
together
that a
lusion

efficacy, as cathartics. So much Gentlemen for chlorosis.

I shall next consider, the latter form of the disease, or suppression of the menses. As I have already mentioned, it is that, in which the menses after having been fully and regularly established, are suddenly suppressed. Suppression of the menses is caused, by exposure to cold, particularly getting the feet wet, certain emotions of the mind, as fear, grief, anger &c violent exercise, it is also suppressed by some diseases, as Phthisis-pulmonalis, organic derangement of the abdominal viscera, and various other affections. Its symptoms are, sluggishness in motion, pain in the head, back and uterine region, accompanied with dyspeptic and hysterical symptoms, constipation of the bowels and fever together with despondency of the mind heat of the skin, frequent pulse and flushing of the face

The ex
to restore
it from
exting
be succe
the con
with p
that o
selected
shall
ion of
be atten
condition
system
to some
crease
at the
this in
It was
Hartshor
hart
on Sha
laoon,
troducin
many c

The indications of cure are two, first to restore the discharge; second, to prevent it from recurring again, by avoiding the exciting causes. That our remedies may be successful, we must accurately, ascertain the condition and state of the system, with which the disease is accompanied, that the appropriate remedies may be selected; conformably to this view, I shall divide the treatment, in suppression of the menses, according as it may be attended with a debilitated chlorotic condition; or the opposite state of the system. In the first, we must resort to remedies, that are calculated to increase action. The article, I shall place at the head of the remedies to meet this indication, is Polygala Senega. It was introduced into practise by Doctor Hartshorne. The root of the plant, is the part employed. Doctor Chapman I am happy to say, speaks highly in its favour, and is entitled to the honour of introducing it into notice, and is one of the many contributions for which, the science

of medicine is indebted to his ample resources. He gives it in decoction, one ounce of the Senega bruised to a pound of water, one ounce of this decoction, should be administered at a time repeated four times a day; when it produces nausea it can be rendered more palatable, by the addition of some aromatic, as orange peel, cinnamon &c. A short time before the menstrual effort is expected, it should be given in as large quantities as the stomach can bear. Our professor of the institutes and practice of physic has given it in the dose of two ounces every second hour; the last remark I shall make on this article, is, that I think it is an emmenagogue well deserving the notice of every practitioner.
The next article that has been used with advantage, in amenorrhoea attended with debility, is the Juniperus Sabina; it appears that the credit of introducing this into practise, is due to Mr Home. It is given in the dose of ten, fifteen, or twenty grains of the powdered leaves, three or four times a day. That it is a

powerfu
contrac
is presen
bility, t
Rubia c
commun
grains,
p Defsio
Earth
a torfid
the dos
thru tis
Phosph
in this
found
ministr
Dr Spu
adapted
to fulfil
are in a
vating
the most
of Iron
tion Ge
vantage

powerful stimulant cannot be denied, and is contraindicated in every case, when a fever is present, but when there exists much debility, the article is an important remedy. Rubia Tinctorum, is also employed as an emmenagogue, in doses of ten or fifteen grains, but I am convinced we are in possession of more efficacious remedies.
Cantharides, is resorted to when there is a torpid and exhausted state of the system, the dose is ten or fifteen drops of the tincture, three times a day, to be gradually increased. Phosphorus, in minute doses has been used in this disease, and no doubt, will be found a valuable remedy — in its administration however caution is necessary. The Spiritus Terebinthina is also used, it is adapted to those cases attended with debility. To fulfil the same indication tonics are indispensable, they are useful by alleviating the debility, which causes the disease, the most efficacious are the preparations of Iron also Peruvian Bark, Columbo, gentian &c. A change of air is also advantageous together with an invigorating

act.
satisfi
usual
of Guara
and spe
Cecale
and wh
times a
account
gains
in decoc
About
the appe
aphly t
These a
reported
more p
but wh
of procu
Ammon
is accon
the system
finished
together
body g

dict. Guaiacum officinale. Dr Dewees became dissatisfied from frequently failing with the usual emmenagogues, he tried the Tinctura of Guaiacum in the dose of a tea spoonfull, and speaks of it in the highest terms.

Secale cornutum, this will frequently succeed when others fail. I have used it several times and in every instance with evident advantage, the dose is fifteen or twenty grains in powder, or it may be exhibited in decoction.

About the time when the menses are expected to appear, it is frequently of advantage to apply blisters to the region of the uterus.

These are the principal remedies that are resorted too in cases of amenorrhoea, many more might be added of minor consequence but which I deem unnecessary to enumerate. I proceed next to the second division of Amenorrhoea, (Suppression) or when the disease is accompanied with a febrile condition of the system. here the pulse is active, face flushed, pains in the back and head, together with a sensation of fullness of the body here the lancet is by all means

to be employed, it obviates the danger of vicarious discharges of blood, and also lessens the inflammatory action; as auxilliary cathartics are to be used of these the Helleborus Niger has been long employed, Dr. Cullen does not think much of it, though of late it has gained much credit. it is to be given about the time the menses are expected at the same time we must employ the semicupium: Electricity is frequently found to be of great utility and deserves a trial Aloes is not to be omitted as a cathartic its powers are increased by the addition of Calomel, antimonials and the saline draughts are also to be employed.
I cannot conclude this dissertation, without expressing my sincere thanks to the Medical Professors of this University, for the useful instruction which I have received from their lectures, and the many marks of friendship, politeness and attention I have experienced, during the several courses, I have attended from all of them, which has not failed to excite in me, the